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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 20 (see A/67/437, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 29th and 32nd meetings, on 14 and 30 November 2012. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/67/SR.29 and 32).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/67/L.17 and A/C.2/67/L.49

2. At the 29th meeting, on 14 November, the representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/67/L.17), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 66/201 of 22 December 2011 as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 10 parts, under the symbol A/67/437 and Add.1-9.

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"*Taking note* of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in which the General Assembly recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability,

"*Stressing* that desertification, land degradation, and drought are challenges of a global dimension and continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries, and stressing also the particular challenges this poses for Africa, the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries,

"*Expressing deep concern* about the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, and calling for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels,

"*Noting* the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management, in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication,

"*Concerned by* the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding and the increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

"*Emphasizing* the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management, the restoration of degraded lands and other sustainable development practices, in the context of sustainable development, to ensure that desertification, land degradation and drought, are combated,

"*Noting also* that avoiding land degradation while restoring degraded land is crucial in order for the rural poor to achieve food security and access to energy and water,

"*Recalling* its high-level meeting on the theme 'Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication',

"*Underlining* the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

"1. *Takes note* of the reports transmitted by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions;

"2. *Expresses its commitment* to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, and urges Member States to take urgent action to reverse desertification, land degradation and drought, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations system,

relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders;

"3. *Invites* the intergovernmental and other relevant processes on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 to give due consideration to the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought;

"4. *Urges* the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders to contribute towards the achievement of a land-degradation-neutral world;

"5. *Resolves* to take coordinated action nationally, regionally and internationally, under the Convention to Combat Desertification, to monitor globally land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, and calls for the implementation of the Convention, taking into account national priorities, circumstances and development strategies;

"6. *Stresses the importance* of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts under way to promote scientific research in accordance with the Convention to Combat Desertification;

"7. *Encourages* capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices;

"8. *Underscores* the need to strengthen the scientific base of activities to address desertification and drought in accordance with the Convention to Combat Desertification, and in this context calls for the early implementation of the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its tenth meeting, to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into account regional balance, to discuss specific options for the provision of scientific advice to its parties, including the establishment of a Scientific Panel, and expresses its support for enhancing the scientific basis of the Convention, including the consideration of a regionally balanced intergovernmental scientific panel on desertification, land degradation and drought;

"9. *Welcomes* the convening of the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, on the theme 'Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas', to be held from 4 to 7 February 2013, in Fortaleza, Brazil;

"10. *Reiterates* the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard, invites States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

"11. *Welcomes* efforts made by the secretariats of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, to organize and hold a high-level meeting on national drought policy in Geneva in March 2013;

"12. *Calls for* enhanced support and strengthening of the implementation of the Convention and the ten-year strategic plan and framework, including through mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources;

"13. *Reiterates its invitation* to the Global Environment Facility, in further enhancing resource allocation during future replenishments, to consider increasing allocations to the land degradation focal area;

"14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session, under the item entitled 'Sustainable development', the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa';

"15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At its 32nd meeting, on 30 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/67/L.49), submitted by the Rapporteur on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.17.

4. At the same meeting, upon the proposal of the Chair, the Committee agreed to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to proceed to take action on the draft resolutions.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.49 had no programme budget implications.

6. Also at the 32nd meeting, on 30 November, the facilitator of the draft resolution, Andreas Pfaffernoschke (Germany), orally corrected the draft resolution (see A/C.2/67/SR.32).

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.49, as orally corrected (see para. 11).

8. Following the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of the United States of America made a statement (see A/C.2/67/SR.32).

9. A statement was also made by the representative of the World Meteorological Organization (see A/C.2/67/SR.32).

10. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.49, draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.17 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

11. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 66/201 of 22 December 2011 as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[2] which, inter alia, recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability, stressed that desertification, land degradation and drought are challenges of a global dimension and continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries, stressed also the particular challenges this poses for Africa, the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, expressed deep concern at the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, and called for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels,

Recalling further that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation and, in view of this, for striving to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, which should act to catalyse financial resources from a range of public and private sources,

Concerned by the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding, increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and the restoration of degraded lands in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought,

Noting that avoiding additional land degradation while restoring degraded land is crucial in order for the rural poor to achieve food security and access to energy and water,

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] Resolution 66/288, annex.

Noting also the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation at all levels among the parties to and the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[3] and the Convention on Biological Diversity,[4] while respecting their individual mandates,

Underlining the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, including its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

Recalling its high-level meeting on the theme "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication",

Welcoming the organization of the second Scientific Conference of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, on the theme "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas", to be held from 4 to 7 February 2013 in Fortaleza, Brazil,

Noting efforts made by the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, to organize and hold a high-level meeting on national drought policy in Geneva in March 2013,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 66/201 and on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;[5]

2. *Calls upon* Member States to take urgent action to reverse desertification, land degradation and drought, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders;

3. *Reaffirms* its resolve, in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to take coordinated action, nationally, regionally and internationally, to globally monitor land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, and its resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance its implementation (2008-2018), including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources, notes the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, encourages and recognizes in this regard the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources, and also encourages capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[5] A/67/295.

at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices;

4. *Encourages* giving appropriate consideration to the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts under way to promote scientific research in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

6. *Also stresses* the importance of efforts under way to strengthen the scientific base of activities to address desertification and drought in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and in this context takes note of the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its tenth meeting, to set up an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, to further discuss the options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification, land degradation and drought issues, taking into account the regional approach of the Convention;

7. *Reiterates* the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard invites States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

8. *Notes* the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the involvement of those stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

9. *Reiterates its invitation* to the Global Environment Facility, in further enhancing resource allocation during future replenishments, to consider increasing allocations to the land degradation focal area, depending on the availability of resources;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.